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**AUTHOR'S PREPRINT, WILL BE PUBLISHED IN**

**Diana Roig Sanz & Reine Meylaerts: Literary Translation and Cultural Mediators in  
'Peripheral' Cultures. Custom Officers or Smugglers? Palgrave-MacMillan**

**Early institutionalised promotion of translation and the socio-biography of Emil  
Walter, translator, press attaché and diplomat<sup>1</sup>**

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The interwar era saw an unprecedented growth of international cultural exchange supported by national and supranational bodies. It innovatively featured international circulation of books including the support of literary translation. This chapter explores these novel modes and strategies on three distinct levels of diplomatic communication: unilateral, bilateral and multilateral. It follows the professional trajectory of Emil Walter (1890-1964), translator and diplomat, and sets his activity as cultural and political mediator against plans, strategies and actions exercised by institutions in multiple European countries across several levels of public administration. Charting the landscape of the emerging schemes of translation promotion in Europe, this chapter seeks to explore the ways an experienced translator entered and navigated the quickly developing diplomatic arena. It, moreover, aims to bring to attention the mutual interaction between the bureaucratic setting Emil Walter worked in and his translator habitus. What had a professional translator and cultural mediator to contribute to the theory and practice of the interwar cultural diplomacy? How did the diplomatic and political setting change the translator? To what extent is the practice of an individual distinguishable from the practice of the whole of the cultural exchange mechanisms?

The accounts of Emil Walter's personal trajectory as well as the outline of the history of intended and actual interwar schemes of institutionalised support of literary translation are

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<sup>1</sup> This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 749871.

largely based on archival research carried out in the Czech Republic and Norway.<sup>2</sup> The institutional archives demonstrate – to some extent – the different planning phases of cultural diplomacy as well as the actual argumentation, contribution and responsibilities of the individuals and administrative units involved. Emil Walter's personal archive – however fragmentary – reveals a more complex personal history reaching far beyond the professional diplomatic setting, and so does other patchy evidence of his life in personal archives of other authors, translators and scholars. As a matter of rule, diplomatic work occurs behind closed doors. Emil Walter was, however, a press attaché at one point in his career and news and stories in the media, either provided by politicians and diplomats or investigated by journalists, offer another perspective to be considered. The following newspapers have been used for this chapter: *Aftenposten* (Norway), *Arbeiderbladet* (Norway), *Berliner Tageblatt* (Germany), *České slovo* (Czechoslovakia), *Nationaltidende* (Denmark), *Politiken* (Denmark).

### **1. Emil Walter's socio-biography**

Translators are indispensable mediators. Without amateur or professional translators, no utterance, article, let alone a book would ever get translated. Many case studies, such those collected in volumes *Translators through History* (Delisle & Woodsworth 1995) and *Agents of Translation* (Milton & Bandia 2009), reveal that translators, the networks of people dealing with translation as well as the outcomes of their work have impact reaching far beyond linguistics or the history of literature. Translators and other cultural mediators can have an essential influence on multilingual urban communities (Meylaerts & Gonne 2014) as well as contribute to the formation of a national identity and the construction of a new culture in a specific region (Bastin 2009). At the same time, translators are people of flesh and bone, they live their everyday lives, possibly do other jobs, meet other people, travel, which all has inevitable impact on their work as translators (Pym 1998, 160-176). As Meylaerts (2010) has shown, a socio-biographical approach to translators can explore the regularities, discontinuities and motivations of their actions across the specific range of fields and geo-political locations they find themselves operating within.

The focus on socio-biography is closely linked to the sociological turn in the translation studies and especially to Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus. Since the early

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<sup>2</sup> Archive of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Praha), Czech National Archive (Národní archiv, Praha), Norwegian National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket, Oslo), Museum of Czech Literature (Památník národního písemnictví, Praha) and Archive of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Norwegian National Archives (Riksarkivet, Utenriksdepartementet, Oslo).

analysis of the specificity of the translatorial habitus and its possible implications for translation studies and translation skill acquisition (Simeoni 1998), the notion of habitus proved fruitful in highlighting translators' embedding in the sociocultural time and space as the importance of the individual translator's trajectory (Wolf and Fukari, 2007; Pym, Shlesinger and Jettmarová 2006; Meylaerts 2006). It describes a "system of durable transposable disposition" that individuals acquire as a result of social interaction in the course of time (Bourdieu 1990, 53). Habitus is a product of historical experience and practice that "produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences" (Bourdieu 1990, 54). It is not limited to acquiring expertise as a professional, however, but also refers to more general lifelong experience, which makes it a powerful tool to examine the relationship between one's personal trajectory and various socio-cultural and professional fields.

Along these lines, this chapter explores Emil Walter's habitus as a translator and follows his socio-biography as he gradually changed from being translator and cultural mediator into being press attaché and diplomat.<sup>3</sup> This professional transformation went hand in hand with his physical displacement from the target country of his translations to the source country, and similarly the direction of his cultural mediation partially shifted. At the same time the chapter explores the system of institutionalised support and promotion of translation that was taking shape in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. As press attaché and diplomat, Emil Walter took an active part in this process and it seems his translator's habitus when entering the new role and field made his job easier and more effective. A broader picture of the international diplomatic arena demarcates more clearly the scope of Walter's operations and elucidates the complexity and dynamics of the field.

Since the early 1910s, Emil Walter was very eager to become a translator of Scandinavian literature into Czech. His brother lived and worked in Copenhagen, and Emil frequently came to stay with him for holidays from the early 1900s; he learned about Danish society intimately and acquired an excellent grasp of the language. A student of Germanic Studies at Prague University, he read Scandinavian literature both in translation and in the original, and he published articles on a variety of Scandinavian topics, reports from his travels

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<sup>3</sup> This account of Emil Walter's work at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including his diplomatic missions in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo, relies largely on the archives of the diplomatic missions and on reports sent on regular basis from the missions to the Ministry headquarters in Prague. These are to be found in the Archive of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague (AMZV). In addition, Emil Walter's fragmentary personal archive was used; now stored in the Museum of Czech Literature (PNP). All translations from non-English languages are mine – OV.

to Scandinavia as well as interviews with famous Danes such as Georg Brandes.<sup>4</sup> Eventually he established relations with a number of Czech publishers and started publishing his translations. By 1920, when he left Czechoslovakia and started to work as press attaché, he had translated some of the most famous Scandinavian writers of the time, such as Selma Lagerlöf, Johannes Vilhelm Jensen and Knut Hamsun, with 8, 3 and 2 translations respectively. He personally chose most of the works and proposed them for publishing. He did not limit himself to translation proper, i.e. to the linguistic and semiotic dimension of textual transfer. Importantly for his translatorial habitus at the time he entered diplomacy, he had taken upon himself a whole set of mediation activities with the translation proper in the virtual centre. His correspondence with Selma Lagerlöf reveals a defamatory fight for Lagerlöf's exclusive authorisation to translate her works with another Czech translator, Karel Rypáček (1885–1957), that only ceased with the outburst of the First World War in 1914, when Rypáček had to leave for the trenches. While personal animosities soon turned into friendships, the combination of perseverance and abrupt external changes – often politically motivated – accompanied Walter throughout his life.

After he moved to Scandinavia, Walter's translating activity dropped substantially: he published 20 translations between 1911 and 1922, but only one translation between 1922 and 1929. In 1929, he moved back to Prague, became Head of the Scandinavian Press Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and published nine more translations from 1929 to 1936, especially novels by Sigrid Undset (seven titles). In 1935, he moved back to Stockholm as the Head of the Mission and yet again, his translation activity faded. This alone shows a strong correlation between place of work and translation activity; Walter kept translating when at home, he stopped when abroad. When in Scandinavia, however, he acted as a consultant for the Czech publishers and kept in touch with other Czech translators of Scandinavian literature offering help.<sup>5</sup> He became friends with his earlier rivals in translation, including Karel Rypáček.

After the Second World War, he became the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Oslo, but stepped down in the wake of the Communist takeover in 1948, emigrated to Sweden and became a lecturer at the Uppsala University. Besides contemporary fiction his focus gradually

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<sup>4</sup> Emil Walter: "Moje návštěvy u velikých Dánů. II. - U Georga Brandesa" [Paying visits to great Danes. II. Georg Brandes], *Zlatá Praha*, No. 38, May 30, 1913, p. 450-451

<sup>5</sup> On his position and role in the Czech publishing field with regard to the choice of the texts for translation, translation activity, communication with authors and other translator as well as his relationship with publisher of Scandinavian literature in Czech see Vimr 2014: 62–101.

shifted towards Old Norse, notably translating the *Edda* and Icelandic sagas.<sup>6</sup> The act of emigration made it impossible for him to publish translations in Czechoslovakia, yet he supposedly kept translating and rejected help offered to him by the Icelandic novelist Halldór Laxness, one of the few authors from the West not censored in the Communist Czechoslovakia at the time.<sup>7</sup> Throughout his life, Walter appeared as a principled and hardworking man with a tendency to emotional reactions.

## 2. From translator and cultural mediator to press attaché

In the wake of the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed, and the Czechoslovak Republic was established as one of the successor states in 1918. The newly formed state had an enormous demand for experts in many areas of bureaucracy, diplomacy and foreign relations being one of them. Emil Walter was established mediator of the Scandinavian culture and literature in Czechoslovakia and was soon offered a position at the newly formed Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as one of the eight Czechoslovak press and cultural attachés in Europe, moving to Copenhagen (and later to Stockholm).

His official position was “press attaché”, but the range of his activities stretched far beyond communication with the press, and evolved over time. His responsibilities included the contact with the local press (in all of Scandinavia, i.e. Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland) as well as monitoring the local press and writing regular press reports for the Prague Foreign Affairs Ministry headquarters. He also maintained contact with persons of special interest to Czechoslovakia, politicians, officials, intellectuals and other opinion-makers who might have intervened locally (publicly or in private) on behalf of Czechoslovakia; they included Slavic-studies scholars, historians, journalists, fiction authors, translators and more, many of whom he had already met personally before the war.<sup>8</sup> He helped to organise various Czechoslovak

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<sup>6</sup> Emil Walter published his first translation from Old Norse in 1919 (*Saga o Gunnlaugovi Hadím Jazyku* [*Saga of Gunnlaugr Serpent-Tongue*], Praha: Ludvík Bradáč), followed by *Saga about the people of Vatnsdæl* (Saga o lidech z Vatnsdalů, Turnov: Müller a spol.), his annotated translation of Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda* in 1929 (*Okouzlení krále Gylfa: Edda*, Praha: Literární a umělecká edice Arkún), the heroic poems from *Poetic Edda* in 1942 (*Edda: bohatýrské písně*, Praha: Evropský literární klub), this was his very last published translation.

<sup>7</sup> In his later correspondence (1954), Emil Walter writes about further translations of Old Norse literature he was working on (the rest of the *Poetic Edda* as well as other sagas) and laments these cannot be published for political reasons. The unpublished translations have not been found. (Letter from Emil Walter to Olaf Broch, June 22, 1954, NB, Brevs. nr. 337.)

<sup>8</sup> In his report on the first 9 months in the office, Emil Walter listed around 100 people he personally met in connection with his job in Denmark and Sweden during this period of time. (“Zpráva o činnosti tiskového attaché Emila Waltera” [Report on the activity of press attaché Emil Walter], September 14, 1921, AMZV, Politické zprávy 1918-1939, Švédsko, Stockholm 1921, č. 35311/1921.) The importance of his personal contacts from the pre-WWI period in Denmark were highlighted already in his first report from October 1920 (“Zpráva tiskového referenta o výsledku recepcce kodaňských žurnalistů u p. ministra u přílež. odevzdání pověř. listin dne 20. září

exhibitions in the Scandinavian countries, co-organise political visits. He maintained contact with translator from Czech into Scandinavian languages and publishers and made translation and publishing suggestions, such as Karel Čapek's *Talks with T. G. Masaryk* to raise the chance the first Czechoslovak president was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, for which he had been repeatedly nominated. It is more accurate to label his position as press and cultural attaché because there was no other person responsible for culture-related activities.

In terms of social embedding of their activity, both press and cultural attachés and translators as cultural mediators have a lot in common. The work of a translator takes place in the field of international relations of exchange and is subject to political, economic and cultural dynamics within the field (Heilbron and Sapiro 2007, drawing on Bourdieu's field theory). Much of the same applies to press and cultural attachés, as they also deal with the international and intercultural dissemination of the intangible cultural goods. Of course, the differences are vast. Translators, though being cultural mediators too, usually deal with the *actual transfer* of cultural goods on the import side; cultural attachés focus on (besides the reporting agenda) the dissemination of *knowledge* about the goods on the export side. Importantly, the impact of the economic and political factors is different for the agents: whereas translation is subject to the current hierarchy of the political and economic fields that varies across time and space (Heilbron and Sapiro 2007, 97ff), a press and cultural attaché, being employed by an official state body with a political leading, is subject to the current political agenda at the very outset. A study of the unilateral, bilateral and multilateral levels of institutionalised translation promotion thus by definition is an analysis of the intended political re-structuring of the field of international relations of exchange.

The intercultural actions taken by both institutions and individuals in (Czechoslovak) diplomacy were apparently a mix of personal instinct, international diplomatic isomorphism and a widespread intuitive belief in literature as a proof of a nation's cultural maturity. In any case, much space was left to personal creativity. People in charge had an opportunity to draw upon their unique experience and take part in designing the promotion strategies in the field of international intellectual cooperation that was haphazardly taking shape, including the institutional promotion of literary translation.

### 3. Unilateral promotion of translation

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1920" [Report of the press attaché on the result of the meeting with Copenhagen journalist on the occasion of the ambassador's presenting the letters of credence on September 20, 1920], October 12, 1920, AMZV, Politické zprávy 1918-1939, Dánsko, Kodaň 1920-1939, Kodaň 1920, č. 494/20.)

One of the first goals of the Czechoslovak diplomacy was to make the new country visible in the international arena, stabilise its position as a trustworthy and natural partner as well as strengthen the national identity both inwards and outwards. For Danes, Norwegians, Swedes and many other Europeans, Czechoslovakia was a new country altogether with little or no previous reference-point readily in mind. It was up to the Czechoslovak diplomats and other experts to choose the ways of promoting the country in their particular geographical territories. Although much of the Czechoslovak bureaucracy was directly inspired by the dissolved Austro-Hungarian Empire, diplomats had no experience with promoting a new country and were forced to be innovative.

Emil Walter was a novice in diplomacy too. In terms of promoting Czechoslovakia, it seems natural that he drew upon his personal experience of getting to know a foreign country and culture. He was most probably inspired by the fact that the Scandinavian countries were far from unknown to the people of Czechoslovakia and their knowledge was mostly based on reading Scandinavian literature that had been vigorously translated into Czech over the past decades (and that actually remained very popular until around 1950, when the Czechoslovak publishing field became heavily politicised). Both as translator and press attaché, Emil Walter operated in peripheral or semi-peripheral cultures.<sup>9</sup> Although these cultures were in a similarly peripheral status in relation to the central ones, there was a strong internal hierarchy. The Scandinavian literatures (both as a whole and as individual Danish, Norwegian and Swedish literatures) heavily dominated literary exchange. While over 1000 book titles were translated from the Scandinavian languages into Czech from 1864 to 1960 with peaks in 1890s and 1910s-1930s, a fraction of book-length translations were published in the other direction, with majority translated into Swedish (15 by 1928), but very few into Danish (about 6 by 1920) and Norwegian (the first book-length translation from Czech into Norwegian was carried out as late as 1930) (Vimr 2014).

Emil Walter put much effort into persuading the Scandinavians to eliminate the disproportion. His early efforts can be labelled as unilateral promotion of translation. This involves a range of actions taken solely by the source country agents in order to gain a more favourable symbolic position in the target country. It does not presuppose any sort of systemic cooperation on the target side. Some of Walter's actions were non-public, such as forwarding original books to translators and publishers, either on demand or based on his own judgement,

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<sup>9</sup> As defined by Johan Heilbron (1999).



or keeping in touch with other experts, diplomats and officials. Other actions were focused on the public and public opinion, and involved the press.

Respecting the best manners of diplomacy, his attitude and strategy in relation to the press and public were usually indirect. This is revealed in a series of three articles on the chances of Danish literature outside Denmark published in the then influential conservative Danish newspaper *Nationaltidende*, focusing largely on cultural matters and foreign affairs. Published in 1922 on the title page of the daily, the articles featured interviews with the ambassadors from three countries: the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and the UK.<sup>10</sup> While there is no archival evidence of Walter's personal involvement in the series of articles, the striking difference in the overall tone and effect of the articles leaves no doubt about the beneficiaries (and likely initiators). The strategy also bears similarities to other projects with Walter's signature.

The key idea of the series is briefly sketched in the first paragraphs of the first article. It argues that should Danish authors make living by writing, they cannot simply rely on the small Danish market and they must be translated and sold abroad. Before the Great War, the argument follows, Germany was their main market, but times have changed and even most famous Danish writers are rarely translated into German. Danish literature needed other markets, which led to the exploration of the Dutch, British and Czechoslovak book markets. But why did the editor choose these three countries? Why not France, Italy or Poland, much larger markets than the Netherlands or Czechoslovakia? The choice of the Netherlands was justifiable for the cultural and geographic proximity. But why Czechoslovakia, a new country people in Denmark generally knew little about? Why were the questions addressed to diplomats and not the relevant decision-makers in the respective countries?

The latter issue was raised by the Dutch ambassador who pointed out that he was a diplomat and no expert in the field. Like his British colleague, he explained that while the Norwegian and (to certain extent) Swedish authors were fairly widely translated, Danish literature was not very well known. Both the Dutch and British interviewees diplomatically concluded that the chances were good. The British interview in particular is not far from a parody on diplomacy and good representation of the UK, as the ambassador frankly yet rather

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<sup>10</sup> E.D.: "Dansk Litteraturs Chancer i Udlandet. Interview med den nederlandske Minister, Ridder van Rappard" [The chances of the Danish literature abroad. Interview with the Dutch ambassador], *Nationaltidende*, August 30, 1922; E.D.: "I Czekoslovakiet har man gennem mange Aar læst danske Bøger" [In Czechoslovakia, people have read Danish book for many years], *Nationaltidende*, September 6, 1922; E.D.: "Dansk Litteraturs Chancer i Udlandet. Lord Granville vil ikke gerne interviewes – men..." [The chances of the Danish literature abroad. Lord Granville would rather not give an interview – but...], *Nationaltidende*, September 13, 1922.

amusingly explains that one cannot expect either British high society to read Danish literature (as they tend to read light literature such as romance novels) or the lower-middle and working classes (because these people are merely interested in entertaining suspense six shilling books and magazines). Moreover, he talks about the poor quality of Danish translations of British literature and *vice versa*.

In stark contrast to these two rather dull interviews suggesting that Danish literature held an unfavourable position in the Netherlands and Great Britain, the interviewer played into the hands of the Czechoslovak ambassador. Making a broad argument, the ambassador suggested that Czechoslovakia had absorbed many cultural impulses from France and the UK, but “at the end of the day, it is the Nordic nations – despite all differences – we have always felt a spiritual affinity with.” He gave a long list of Danish authors translated into Czech and stressed that this was thanks to “a large number of [...] excellent translators who have a very good grasp of the Danish language.” He also mentioned that copyright was fully protected as Czechoslovakia acceded to the Berne Convention in 1921. Summing up the first part of the interview, the ambassador said that Danish literature had a very good chance in Czechoslovakia. He, then, however, changed the subject and claimed that many Czechoslovaks speak Danish fluently whereas “you can hardly find a single Dane who speaks our language,” and went on to promote the recently established scholarship for students of Czech at the Charles University in Prague. He concluded the interview saying: “We have absorbed a large number of spiritual impulses from Denmark, we are familiar with your exquisite literature and your great philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, now we would like *you* to get to know *us* and *our* values.”

The interview makes explicit a strategy that typically remained implicit in other promotion articles with Emil Walter’s reasoning. Nine such articles (anonymous) have been identified in the former half of the 1920s in the Scandinavian press.<sup>11</sup> The set-up was based on an idea that the number of translations and the knowledge about the source country strongly correlate, leading to the conclusion that raising the number of translation would equally raise the awareness of the source country. Being diplomatically indirect, Walter never stated that Scandinavians should translate more from Czech. Rather, he made comparisons and let the

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<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the first one appeared in the Norwegian daily Aftenposten (Anon: “Norge og Czekoslovakiet. Czekernes voksende interesse for norsk litteratur.” [Norway and Czechoslovakia. Czechs’ interest for Norwegian literature on the rise.], August 12, 1922). Emil Walter repeats similar points in interviews he gave as “a Czech linguist” during his private visit to Denmark and Faroe Islands in 1931 (Anon.: “Om Dagmar i Prag. Tjekkisk Sprogforsker paa Besøg.” [On Dagmar in Prague. Czech linguist pays visit.], Ekstrabladet, October 28, 1931; Anon.: “Evropas hyggelige Kakkelovnskrog” [The most pleasant inglenook], Politiken, October 29, 1931). The main points of the articles are echoed in later political speeches promoting the Czechoslovak culture and literature in Scandinavia. (See footnote 26.)

readers do the reasoning. The long record of Czech translations of Scandinavian literature, to which Walter never forgot to make reference, was supposed to inspire Scandinavians to reciprocate. With such a promotion set-up, Emil Walter, a translator-diplomat by own choice, involved all existing translators from Danish to Czech (and similarly from other languages too) in diplomacy; they became translators-diplomats too, after the fact and by the choice of Emil Walter. Their activity as translators and cultural mediators was presented as a commitment for the other party that was supposed to catch up and learn to know the Czech literature and Czechoslovakia, while the Czechoslovak Republic was there to give a helping hand and support their linguistic, cultural and social education, as the newspaper articles occasionally also promoted educational programmes for students interested in studying in Czechoslovakia.

Besides translation, Emil Walter's promotion strategy (as seen in the abovementioned articles) had one more cornerstone, framing the translation project in a broader historical pattern: Walter tried to emphasise the continuity of cultural and political relations between the countries, despite changing geopolitical landscape of Central Europe. The sound and long-standing relations in the past were presented as a good springboard for the future. The record of ties was extensive, but often historically distant and unconvincing: in the Danish press attention was often drawn to the old Danish popular Ballad about Queen Dagmar, the daughter of Ottokar I of Bohemia and the beloved wife of Valdemar II of Denmark in 1200s, in Norway they often highlighted Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's fierce fight for the rights of Slovaks in the early 1900s, in Sweden – rather surprisingly – they emphasised the Swedish capturing of Prague in 1648. These historical excursions created an impression of continuity in terms of international relations with Czechoslovakia, a country that, on the one hand, had only recently been created but, on the other, had always been there in various reincarnations. It should be noted that Emil Walter's interest in the history of the cultural and literary relations was far from superficial. His publications from 1920s include a translation of a non-fiction book on Finland<sup>12</sup> and – interestingly – a self-published re-edition of the Czech translation of the Ballad about Queen Dagmar originally published in 1846.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4. Bilateral promotion of translation**

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<sup>12</sup> Eva Moltesen: *Kniha o Fincech. Kulturně-historický přehled*. [A Book on Finns. A Cultural and Historical Overview.], Praha, Orbis 1926. The book features a foreword by Eemil Nestor Setälä.

<sup>13</sup> *Píseň o královně Dagmarě*. [The Song on Queen Dagmar.], translated by Jan Erazim Vocel, Praha, Emil Walter 1927. Emil Walter accompanied the book with his own afterword. It was his only self-published piece of writing.

While Emil Walter was still engaged with the unilateral promotion of translation, the headquarters of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs was already planning a massive promotion campaign on a bilateral basis in 1928. Bilateral cultural cooperation was gaining ground all over Europe around the turn of the decade and Czechoslovakia was not lagging behind. Translation was part and parcel of such cooperation. The officials at the Czechoslovak Foreign Affairs Ministry clearly identified the importance of translation for building up stronger international ties.

As early as 1928, when discussing the possibilities of reinforcing the cooperation and common identity of the states associated in the Little Entente defence alliance (Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia), the Czechoslovak experts proposed a promotion based on literary translation. In fact, the matters of cultural diplomacy were given priority over economic or political diplomacy. Long-term impact schemes were discussed, such as education, revision of biased textbooks, as well as the possible effects of literary translation. A detailed proposition was made to publish specialized translation editions in the respective countries with double editorship:

A further way of bringing the Little Entente nations closer together would be on a higher level of promotion, i.e. in the form of purely literary translation editions with double editorship, for instance there would be two editors of the Romanian edition in Prague – one in Prague, one in Bucharest (in mutual cooperation); such editions would comprise fiction and sometimes non-fiction (history of literature, politics, a comprehensive anthology in the original language and so forth). A private publisher would be engaged while the respective states would stand for the authorisation costs, translation costs and possibly would buy a larger number of copies for the public libraries. All in all there would be 6 editions:

1 and 2: South-Slavic edition in Prague and Bucharest,

3 and 4: Romanian edition in Beograd and Prague,

5 and 6: Czechoslovak edition in Beograd and Bucharest.<sup>14</sup>

The fairly detailed description of the Little Entente inwards cultural diplomacy also included bilingual editions of canonical literary works, special collections of books that would

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<sup>14</sup> “Vnitřní propagace malodohodová. Náčrt programu malodohodové vnitřní propagandy vyplynul z porady III. sekce, konané dne 12. června 1928” [Inwards Little Entente propaganda. Draft programme of the Little Entente inwards propaganda as a result of a meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> section, June 12, 1928], AMZV, Propagace vlastní, Propagace vlastní - malodohodová, č. 88451/28, došlo 30. 6. 1928.

travel from library to library to enhance to availability of books, as well as book market measures ensuring that Little Entente books were always available on the shelves, up-to-date articles on literature and cultural events in the Little Entente countries prepared by the press attachés at the respective embassies and published by literary and other magazines.

From 1929 until 1935, Emil Walter work in Prague as Head of the Scandinavian Press Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affair. He took no part in drafting the bilateral agreements within the Little Entente (there is no archival evidence and he was not in Prague at the time). However, the general ideas and goals show striking similarities to Emil Walter's endeavours in terms of the utmost importance of translation for strengthening international ties. It suggests that the importance of fiction and non-fiction translation for the long-term promotion of the country was close to a diplomatic commonplace. It also shows the difference between a unilateral and bilateral approach to the same issue.

With a small number of individual exceptions, the scheme never came into practice. In the light of the ever-stronger revisionist propaganda driven by Germany, Hungary and Italy during 1930s, long-term goals and inwards Little Entente cultural promotion seemed out of place, and the emphasis shifted to speedy reaction to ongoing propaganda (focus on journalists and politicians) and outwards promotion (focus on France, UK and USA). However, the idea of promoting translations was not abandoned altogether. It became part of bilateral cultural agreements that were gradually gaining ground across Europe in the 1930s.

Two types of bilateral cultural agreements concluded were in Europe in the interwar era. The most widespread type originated in France and initially focused exclusively on education, exchange of students and teachers, as well as revision of biased history textbooks. Gradually, other fields were added, such as exchange of books (between national libraries) and – notably – support of both fiction and non-fiction translation. The internal discussions at the ministerial sections reveal the growing diplomatic isomorphism on the issue: experts and officials tended to observe closely the steps taken by other countries and follow the suit if considered positive; not only the content of the treaties was considered, but also the negotiation and ratification procedures.<sup>15</sup> By around 1930, the agreements grew almost identical across countries, both as to form and content.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> On institutional isomorphism see Dimmaggio and Powell 1983.

<sup>16</sup> This assumption is based on a dozen of treaties between, Czechoslovakia, France, Poland, Romania, the Scandinavian countries and Yugoslavia negotiated and concluded from mid-1920s until 1938. The treaties are archived in the dossiers containing the internal Foreign Ministry discussions on the treaties. See the archive of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: RA UD 1924, boks 7183, G27, D, sak 1/37; and the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education archive: "Dohoda o kulturních stycích mezi Československem a Norskem" [Treaty on the

They were rather short (usually about one page of text) and their foremost goal was to foster mutual cultural exchange generally. As formulated in one of the agreements, the parties agreed “to support scientific, literary and artistic relations between [both countries] in all fields”,<sup>17</sup> naming some of the areas of interest: university language courses, exchange of university students and teachers, support of translation, exhibitions and associations. Typically, these agreements were strictly reciprocal and assumed equal status of both parties. At the same time, any specific action was – due to relatively open formulations – highly dependent of the good will (and finance) of the particular countries. Until the outbreak of World War II, the four most active countries to enter into such agreements were France (with 13 signed bilateral agreements), Poland (10), Czechoslovakia (9) and Belgium (8) (Haigh 1974, 47).

The other type of cultural agreement was concluded by Nazi Germany with Joseph Goebbels as Minister of Propaganda. These agreements (with Hungary in 1936, Japan 1938, Italy 1938, Spain 1939) did not foster cultural exchange in general; on the contrary, they regulated and centralised it, suppressing private activity and strengthening the control and supervision of the state institutions. A great part of the agreements was devoted to education, while other cultural activities (translation, exhibitions, textbook revisions etc.) were given substantially less importance, and (independent) associations were prohibited altogether. In comparison to the former type, these agreements were very long (about six times longer) and detailed. They did not feature the same reciprocity but favoured the dissemination of the German culture: Hungary, for instance, agreed to teach German language at its schools, whereas Germany merely agreed to support Hungary in its endeavours.<sup>18</sup> The regulation involved translation too – in the agreement with Spain, both parties agreed to mutual censorship: “Die Veröffentlichung von Uebersetzungen von Werken politischer Emigranten des anderen Landes werden die vertragschliessenden Parteien im Rahmen der geltenden Bestimmungen verhindern.“ [The contracting parties will prevent the publication of translations of works by political emigrants of the other country within the framework of current regulations.]<sup>19</sup>

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cultural relations between Czechoslovakia and Norway], April 22, 1937, NA, fond Ministerstvo školství, karton 3507, sig. 35, složka Norsko, podsložka Norsko Š. O. a, č. 72896/1937

<sup>17</sup> The wording was almost identical in all agreements, here cited after “Dohoda o uměleckých stycích mezi republikou československou a královstvím dánským” [Agreement on the artistic relations between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Kingdom of Denmark], NA, fond Ministerstvo školství, karton 3499, sig. 35, složka Dánsko, podsložka Dánsko a, č. 66684/1937.

<sup>18</sup> See *Reichsgesetzblatt Teil II*, nr. 17, from April 27, 1937, p. 132-8.

<sup>19</sup> “Der Inhalt des Kulturabkommenes”, *Berliner Tageblatt*, January 25, 1939.

Back in Stockholm as the Head of the Mission in 1935, Emil Walter became involved in concluding the first type of the cultural agreement in Scandinavia. In 1936 and 1937, Czechoslovakia concluded bilateral cultural agreements with Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The agreements were a diplomatic answer to an intensified anti-Czechoslovak Nazi propaganda in the region. The international position of Czechoslovakia was deteriorating rapidly. Bureaucrats and politicians publicly denied any political dimension to the cultural agreements, but at the same time referred to “the idea of peace” and the head of the department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education claimed in connection with the Czechoslovak-Swedish agreement: “We must not put everything on the shoulders of Geneva [i.e. the League of Nations], we cannot expect her exclusively to guarantee the peace.”<sup>20</sup> The League of Nations was obviously not trusted anymore as a peacemaker.

For some countries, the agreements were a matter of prestige rather than a practical measure. When Norway decided to sign the agreement with Czechoslovakia in 1937 (the first Norwegian agreement of the kind), it was triggered by a similar agreement between Czechoslovakia and Sweden, its larger and more experienced neighbour.<sup>21</sup> Norwegian diplomacy found it challenging to see the benefits. For Norway, no such agreements were supposedly necessary in relation to larger countries, while they made sense for peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. As put by the Norwegian minister of foreign affairs Halvdan Koht: “These cultural agreements are something new in the international relations [...]. When it comes to the large and known countries, such as Germany or the UK, we do not need any agreement to foster the cultural cooperation. But when it comes to the small countries and the countries with whom we are not in a daily contact, there you need a stimulus.”<sup>22</sup>

The Czechoslovaks, on the other hand, were in no doubt about the practical qualities of the agreements. In the preliminary assessment of the Czechoslovak-Swedish bilateral cultural agreement (negotiated in 1936), the Czechoslovak diplomats argued that a number of items in the agreement (such as exchange scholarships for students) had already been executed in earlier years, but not on a regular basis, and with no favourable balance. The issue of translations from Czech into Swedish reappeared: “We will, moreover, be the main beneficiaries of the agreement, especially when it comes to the exchange of translations (300 books have been

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<sup>20</sup> “O švédsko-československé kulturní spolupráci” [On the Swedish-Czechoslovak cultural cooperation], *České slovo*, February 1, 1936.

<sup>21</sup> RA UD 1924, boks 7183, G27, D, sak 1/37.

<sup>22</sup> “En kulturtraktat mellom Tsjekkoslovakia og Norge?” [A cultural agreement between Czechoslovakia and Norway?], *Arbeiderbladet*, March 10, 1937.

translated into the Czechoslovak language, compared to 15 in the opposite direction), but also other promotion work has always been executed readily on the Czechoslovak side whereas it has had to struggle substantially in Sweden.”<sup>23</sup> Although the agreements did not bind the countries to any substantial financial input and were completely flexible as to the practical outcomes, the Czech experts made it clear for the politicians that money would be involved on the Czech side due to the political dimension of the agreement: “The international situation, however, as well as fulfilling the spirit of the agreement of course, will require some financial costs.”<sup>24</sup>

The agreements were far more important for Czechoslovakia than for the Scandinavian countries. They were the last major public diplomatic Czechoslovak attempt to counterbalance the anti-Czechoslovak propaganda fuelled by the Nazi Germany. They were another attempt to restructure the field of international relations of exchange with the help of cultural exchange, including translation. Based on the same principle of counterbalancing a disproportionate relationship, Emil Walter’s unilateral approach was now supplemented with a bilateral approach for greater effect. The promotion of the agreements in the Scandinavian countries recycled Emil Walter’s earlier design. The existing translations into Czech and the historical points of contact between the countries served as evidence of knowledge and interest on the Czechoslovak part, drawing attention to the disproportion to be eliminated. During his official visits to the Scandinavian countries, the Czechoslovak Minister of Education<sup>25</sup> Emil Franke gave speeches that all included the idea from the early 1920s articles and the Scandinavian press cited from the speeches heavily.<sup>26</sup> This may be interpreted as an evidence that Emil Walter – with his habitus as translator and cultural mediator – had the ability and power to influence the design and structure of the Czechoslovak cultural diplomacy, including the promotion of literary translation. The strategy of the Little Entente inward cultural promotion

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<sup>23</sup> “Zpráva periodická č. 4 za 4. čtvrtletí 1935” [Periodical report no. 4 for the 4th quarter 1935], February 7, 1936, AMZV, Politické zprávy 1918-1939, Švédsko, Stockholm 1929-1939, Stockholm 1936, č. 90dův/1936.

<sup>24</sup> “Dohoda o kulturních a uměleckých stycích mezi republikou Československou a královstvím Dánským” [The agreement on the cultural and artistic relations between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Kingdom of Denmark], May 10, 1937, NA, fond Ministerstvo školství, karton 3499, sig. 35, složka Dánsko a, č. 66684/1937.

<sup>25</sup> In Czechoslovakia, the cultural agreements were a shared responsibility of the Ministry of Education (as it promoted the exchange of students and teachers) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>26</sup> See the draft and final versions of the speeches. They are in the following folders: “Kodaň, zájezd ministra školství a národní osvěty v r. 1937” [Copenhagen, official visit of the minister of education in 1937], NA, fond Ministerstvo školství, karton 3499, sig. 35, složka Dánsko. Zájezdy, č. 119989/1937; “Norsko, zájezd ministra školství a národní osvěty v březnu 1937. Projev” [Norway, official visit of the minister of education in 1937. The speech.], NA, fond Ministerstvo školství, karton 3507, složka Norsko, podsložka Norsko. Šíření kultury, č. 119478/1937; “Švédsko, zájezd ministra školství a národní osvěty v březnu 1937. Projev” [Sweden, official visit of the minister of education in March 1937. The speeches.], NA, fond Ministerstvo školství, karton 3513, složka Švédsko, podsložka Švédsko. Zájezdy, č. 119986/1937.



as well as the advancement of bilateral cultural agreement in Europe reveal, however, that Walter's style and impact was perhaps less idiosyncratic and more governed by overall trends and his brief. This becomes more apparent if we zoom out another step and focus on the multilateral promotion of translation.

## **5. Multilateral promotion of translation**

The interwar field of institutionalised support of translation stretched across three layers of cultural diplomacy. Unilateral actions made part of the everyday diplomatic work with most immediate effect. Bilateral cultural agreements had long-term goals and were a function of the actual bilateral relationship, as demonstrated by the striking difference between the French and Nazi styled agreements. Emil Walter was part of a much more complex structure with a layer he might not have been completely aware of. The third layer, the multinational promotion of cultural cooperation had a specific history that had a decisive impact on the formation and final design of the translation-related projects. The bilateral cultural agreements were a continuation of the efforts to support (for instance by establishing special schools) a particular national diaspora, initially the French one formed in the wake of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes of 1685 (Haigh 1974: 28). The agreements had a strong educational ethos and relied on a mutual respect for cultural difference. The multilateral intellectual cooperation, on the other hand, had roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century practical multinational cooperation that had the ambition of reaching beyond and across borders and states.

Institutionalised international intellectual and cultural exchange was already very lively before the First World War, but it was strictly detached from diplomacy and politics.<sup>27</sup> In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a number of important multinational institutions were created. All of them were non-governmental and usually focused on solving one particular issue of multinational cooperation and communication, such as International Telegraph Union (1865) or General Postal Union (1874). This so called practical internationalism was particularly lively in the area of intellectual cooperation. By World War I, several hundred independent international associations were formed, dealing with the matters of religion, science, education, literature, arts and so forth. (Kolasa, 1962, 15). Founded by Victor Hugo in 1878, l'Association Littéraire et Artistique Internationale was the most influential of literature oriented organisation. Initiating what is known as the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary

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<sup>27</sup> The functioning of diplomacy until WWI has been well described. For a concise overview see for instance Northedge, 1986: 1–24.

and Artistic Works (1886), it had an indirect (as it aimed at protecting the rights of authors) yet far-reaching impact on literary translation.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century an umbrella organisation was created, the Union of International Associations, and the number of its members rose from 132 in 1910 to 230 in 1914, around 50 % of all international associations of the time, the number of which is estimated at 500 (Kolasa 1962, 15). When the League of Nations was founded in 1920, it embraced many of the practically oriented associations. The International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, established in 1922, was one of the organisations that operated under the auspices of the League of Nations.<sup>28</sup> The original 12-member committee (among them luminaries such as Henri Bergson, Marie Curie-Sklodowska and Albert Einstein) augmented to 19 members by 1937 with over 150 external advisors (in 1932) (Kolasa 1962, 22f).

Initially, fiction and non-fiction translation drew no attention of the Committee. This may sound surprising, as translation is one of the most natural means of international understanding and getting to know the unknown other. The foremost goal of the Committee, however, was not to foster relations between individual countries. The members of the Committee were responding to the decline of supranational intellectual community, the rise of nationalism and the formation of national states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of intellectual cooperation between individual nations, they aspired to circumventing national states and strived for internationalism with *l'esprit universel* (Kolasa 1962, 42–46). Building bridges between the nations was left to the national states (cf. the bilateral cultural agreements).

Despite its global ambitions, the Committee was subject to inherent limitations as it was strongly shaped by European problems and the necessity to establish and maintain new order after the Great War. With attachment to categories such as nationhood, empire and race coupled with a growing activity of non-European members, its universalistic aspirations were overshadowed by the idea of a dialogue between “civilisations” (Laqua 2011, Kolasa 1962, 57–66). This left more room for a reflection of cultural difference and a search for intercultural communication. It became natural to consider the role of translation.

Although some first ideas on the importance of literature and translation for international cultural cooperation within the walls of the League of Nations date back to the mid-1920s, when Paul Valéry, the member of the French Academy, was interested in it, the first tangible translation-related project did not start until 1932: *Index Translationum*.

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<sup>28</sup> For an outstanding visualisation of the complexity of personal and organisational relations within the League of Nations see Grandjean 2017.

Programmes for an active support of translation appeared later on, in the mid-1930s, and the initiative did not arise from the West European centre of the Committee, but from non-European and small European countries who also supported the programme financially. With a clear purpose to introduce the most important works of the respective non-European national literatures into a world language, two collections of translations into French appeared: Japanese and Ibero-American. In Europe, the Romanian delegation brought up an idea in 1936 that the Committee should publish “[...] une collection des traductions dans une ou plusieurs des grandes langues universelles, d'ouvrages représentatifs et classiques pris aux différentes littératures européennes de langues régionales [...]” [a collection of translations of representative and classical works from various European literatures written in regional languages into one or more big universal languages] (*Rapport...* 1936, 8). Both large and small nations were supposed to benefit from the translations from smaller European languages into more widely used languages. The benefit for latter ones (except for the source-country) would have been indirect, as they were supposed to “[...] plus facilement aborder la littérature et, par conséquent, connaître l'âme de leurs voisins, ce qui ne peut qu'aider à une compréhension réciproque.” [to have an easier access to literature and, in consequence, know the soul of their neighbours, which would certainly contribute to a reciprocal understanding] (*Rapport...* 1936: 64). No volumes were published under this initiative as it was obviously overtaken by the Second World War.

This brief outline of a multilateral scheme for the institutionalised support of literary translation reveals yet another layer of the complex international field of literary exchange as well as the limitations of an individual agent in the field. Emil Walter was very active and ambitious on the unilateral level of international promotion of translation. But there is no evidence of any coordination with the actions taken on the bilateral level outside the region he was responsible for, let alone the plans and actions made on the multilateral level. Walter's ways and means of cultural diplomacy was not, however, in conflict with the development of the field. On the contrary, there are echoes of the general idea of institutionalised support of translation as a means of fostering mutual understanding in all three layers. It only took some time for the idea to move from the unilateral to the bilateral and finally to the multilateral level.

## **6. The habitus as a translator, cultural mediator and diplomat**

After the Second World War, Emil Walter was appointed the ambassador to the newly established Czechoslovak mission in Oslo. He stepped down in March 1948 in the wake of the Communist overturn in Czechoslovakia, emigrated to Sweden and became a lecturer (in Czech)

at the Uppsala University. As if driven by his translatorial habitus, he kept translating despite publishing restrictions. The Czechoslovak publishing field, heavily dominated by the political field, made it impossible for him to publish his translations. Émigré and a person loyal to the interwar political and cultural regime, he was regarded as an enemy of the nation. This unresolvable contradiction eventually led to his mixed feelings of “being utterly useless and redundant”.<sup>29</sup>

Even before he had left diplomacy, Emil Walter’s interwar diplomatic strategy was heavily criticised. In 1947, the Czechoslovak ambassador to Denmark wrote with obvious reference to Emil Walter’s earlier activities in a report to the Prague Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “A campaigner or diplomat would be under misapprehension if he wished to build a relationship between the two small countries [i.e. Czechoslovakia and Denmark] on such facts as for instance (figuratively speaking) that queen Dagmar was the daughter of Ottokar I of Bohemia or that Tycho Brahe lived and is buried in Prague.”<sup>30</sup>

Was Emil Walter’s diplomatic project a failure from the very beginning? Was he – with his translatorial habitus – unfitted for a position in diplomacy, a position that eventually brought him to emigration and despair, making his dispositions as translator and cultural mediator superfluous and unusable? Or was he the right person in the right place at the wrong time? A person that made the best of his translatorial habitus in the field of intercultural exchange but was eventually overridden by events happening within the political field he had no power over?

From the very beginning in the 1920s, Emil Walter was very persistent in applying his experience as translator and cultural mediator, his belief in the literature (and its translation) as a means of getting to know a foreign country. He was ready to combine the topic of translation with any issue at hand. In an interview for the Norwegian daily *Aftenposten*, for instance, Emil Walter talked about the official Czechoslovak press service in the position of press attaché.<sup>31</sup> Although he was actually describing a tool of Czechoslovak international propaganda, the overall feeling one gets reading the article is quite the opposite. He suggested that the main task of the Czechoslovak attaché in Scandinavia was to translate Norwegian literature into Czech and inform Norwegians about the success of it in Czechoslovakia. Similarly, in a later interview (1931) for the Danish daily *Politiken* Emil Walter (then the head of the Scandinavian

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Emil Walter to Olaf Broch, March 29, 1959, NB, Brevs. nr. 337. See also Vimr 2009.

<sup>30</sup> “Periodická politická zpráva za 4. čtvrtletí a celoroční stručný přehled r. 1946” [Periodical report for the 4th quarter and the summary for 1946], January 6, 1947, AMZV, Politické zprávy 1945-1977, Dánsko, Kodaň, Zprávy ZÚ Kodaň 1946, č. 153/46/dův.

<sup>31</sup> “Norge og Czekoslovakiet” [Norway and Czechoslovakia], August 12, 1922.

Press Department of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs) talked simultaneously about the Czech translations of Danish literature and about how well the Czechoslovak economy was doing in the time of economic crisis.<sup>32</sup> Except for these slightly extreme cases, would other people with a different *habitus* do a different and a better job? Did the Czechoslovak diplomats have much to choose from in the early stages of cultural diplomacy?

At the outset of the Czechoslovak diplomatic presence in Scandinavia, the envoys were unsure about a suitable strategy. The envoy to Sweden discussed the topic of promotion of Czechoslovakia with his colleague from the USA who advised him, as later reported to the Prague headquarters, “that some of our [Czechoslovak] best hockey or football teams should come here as soon as possible” because sports propaganda was supposedly the most efficient in Sweden.<sup>33</sup> Were such undertakings as inviting a football or ice-hockey team beyond Emil Walter’s mental map? Would a person with a background in music – for instance – promote Czechoslovakia differently, maybe drawing attention to the then internationally ever more fashionable Czech composers, such as Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák and Leoš Janáček, the first being rather popular in Sweden for his residency in Gothenburg lasting several years? Such a music lover might have found that the cultural knowledge gap between Scandinavia and Czechoslovakia was not all that wide and deep and that the disproportion was in favour of the Czechs. It might have been much easier to promote music with no need for translators, publishers and many more agents. Or was putting all the eggs in one basket of literary translation something obvious and natural that everybody would have done? After all, Czechoslovak diplomats in the UK were also very keen on promoting Czechoslovakia through translation, making literature serve the state in the field of international relations of exchange (Chitnis forthcoming). Intriguing as they may be, many of these questions are impossible to find an answer to. However, a socio-biographical analysis of Emil Walter’s personal trajectory elucidates the way his translator’s and cultural mediator’s dispositions he acquired in his early life contributed to his work as a press attaché and diplomat facing a rapidly evolving and multi-layered field.

In his early life, Emil Walter acquired a *habitus* as translator and cultural mediator when struggling for his position in the Czech publishing field. After he entered diplomacy, he acquired his *habitus* as press attaché and diplomat. The two complemented each other and made it natural for him to take part in the structuring the field of international relations of exchange

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<sup>32</sup> “Evropas hyggelige Kakkelovnskrog” [The most pleasant inglenook], October 28, 1931.

<sup>33</sup> “Propaganda ve Švédsku” [Propaganda in Sweden], December 9, 1920, AMZV, Propagace vlastní, Švédsko, no. 360/20.

at least in the field of translation exchange on the unilateral level. As similar structuring strategies were in place at both bilateral and multilateral levels of the institutionalised translation promotion, his approach matched the overall cultural diplomacy strategies of the time as he complemented them with his particular dispositions. This – including his acquisition of a habitus as diplomat – opened new career prospects to him, advancing him to the position of the Head of the Scandinavian Press Department, the Head of the Mission in Stockholm and finally Ambassador in Norway. It was only a radical change in Czechoslovak and international political fields that threw his habitus (both as translator, cultural mediator and diplomat) out of balance with the hierarchy of fields in which he was operating.

To assess the impact of the interwar institutional support of translation at all three levels – unilateral, bilateral and multilateral – is not an easy task. In the short-lived interwar era, the long-term programmes – that required time to negotiate, design and put into practice – had too little room to flourish and show results. The numbers of books published is far too low to provide any statistical support. A rough assessment can be based on 1) the post-war reflections of the programmes, 2) the ideas, plans and programmes that survived the Second World War, and 3) how similar schemes evolved over the decades up to our days.

The multilateral institutionalised support of translation was put forward by the League of Nations. According to a critical analysis carried out in the early post-war year, the League failed to preserve peace - which was its main goal – but it proved rather successful in the field of economic and social cooperation (Northedge 1986, 165). This is why these agendas were taken over by the United Nations and the International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation was transformed into the UNESCO. *Index Translationum* was retained and the idea of representative works of national literatures turned into the Catalogue of Representative Works (over 1000 book translation supported in 1948-2005, most of them into English and French). The Catalogue of Representative Works was discontinued in 2005. However, there are other multilateral programmes supporting the translation of literature in Europe. European Commission's Creative Europe framework programme, for instance, prioritises literary translation projects “encouraging the translations from lesser used languages into English, German, French and Spanish (Castilian) as these may contribute to a wider circulation of the works” (*Creative...* 2017: 1).<sup>34</sup> The idea of support for translation into widely used languages

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<sup>34</sup> Lesser known languages include all languages recognised in EU Member States, except English, German, French and Spanish (Castilian).

for the sake of a wider circulation is strikingly similar to the 1936 proposition made by the Romanian delegation (see above).

Bilateral cultural agreements were similarly retained since the war. The immediate effect on translation, however, is far from obvious. Moreover, the rise of the Iron Curtain made it hard to put the agreements into practice across the East-West divide, even though most of them remained in force. It seems that most effort was put into the issues of education and the exchange of students and teachers.

Finally, it is the unilateral institutionalised promotion of translation driven by the source countries that has seen major success over recent decades, at least if we consider the fact that nowadays probably every European country has a state-funded institution for the promotion of the national literature abroad. And it seems to work well for peripheral and semi-peripheral countries (Hacohen 2014). The set-up is very different from Emil Walter's practice, of course. But it is based on the same assumption as his first attempts at the institutionalised promotion of translation in the early 1920s: if you want to make your country and culture better known abroad, promoting the translation of literature is a good starting point.

The interwar institutionalised promotion of translation thus seems to be at the beginning of a principal paradigmatic shift from translation flows driven by the demand on the target side of the translation process to a system with ever more complex interventions from the source-side introducing supply-driven translations to compensate for a supposed lack of demand. An analysis of this paradigmatic shift is beyond the scope of this chapter, however, and has been explored elsewhere (see Vimr forthcoming).

## **Abbreviations**

AMZV: Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Prague, Czech Republic

NA: Národní archiv, Prague, Czech Republic

NB: Nasjonalbiblioteket, Oslo, Norway

PNP: Památník národního písemnictví, Prague, Czech Republic

RA UD: Riksarkivet, Utenriksdepartementet, Oslo, Norway

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